Web Designer Pro™
DNS Course Checklist

🔧 DOMAIN & HOSTING SETUP

- ☐ Register domain (using a registrar like Namecheap, GoDaddy or your trusted host)
- ☐ Consider separating domain registration and hosting for flexibility & security (I use and recommend SiteGround)
- ☐ Update Nameservers to point domain to your web host (if domain registration is separate from the host)
- ☐ Get EPP/Auth Code if transferring domain

Domain types:

- ☐ Primary (like webdesignerpro.com)
    - ☐ External (if hosting but domain purchased elsewhere)
- ☐ Add-on (different domain URL hosted on the same server)
- ☐ Subdomain (like josh.intransitstudios.com)
- ☐ Staging (like testing.webdesignerpro.com)
- ☐ Temporary (host-generated)
- ☐ Parked (active domain but inactive website)
- ☐ Custom (SaaS-connected – e.g. Circle, Webflow, Kajabi, etc)

🌐 DNS RECORDS

- ☐ Access DNS settings via Zone Editor

Configure the following records: (if needed)

- ☐ A Record → points domain to host IP
- ☐ CNAME → for subdomains, aliases
- ☐ MX Records → email routing (covered below)
- ☐ TXT Records → SPF, DKIM, DMARC for email validation

*** Leave unused advanced records alone unless directed ***

📬 EMAIL SETUP

- ☐ Choose email host (recommended: [Google Workspace](), [Zoho](), [Microsoft 365]())
- ☐ Avoid using email at hosting (unless temporary or internal)
- ☐ Configure MX records to route mail properly

IMAP vs POP:

- ☐ Default to IMAP for all modern email setups
- ☐ Avoid POP unless the client insists
- ☐ If using POP, ensure it's backed up locally (on-site)

✉️ EMAIL DELIVERABILITY

- ☐ Match 'From' address to your domain (you@yourdomain.com)
- ☐ Use a transactional email service ([SendGrid](), [Mailgun](), [Postmark]())
- ☐ Install SMTP plugin (e.g. [WP Mail SMTP](), [FluentSMTP]())

Set DNS authentication:

- ☐ SPF → tells inboxes who can send
- ☐ DKIM → signs your emails
- ☐ DMARC → sets policies if others fail
- ☐ Test with a tool like [MXToolbox]()

🔒 SECURITY

Install SSL certificate: (via your host)

- ☐ Let's Encrypt (Free)
- ☐ Let's Encrypt Wildcard (Free-Premium)
- ☐ Wildcard with SAN if needed (Premium)
- ☐ Force HTTPS via hosting tools or [SiteGround Optimizer Plugin]()
- ☐ Use [Sucuri](), [Wordfence]() or security plugins for monitoring & malware cleanup
- ☐ Double-check all media paths, internal links, and embed URLs post-launch

⚡ SITE PERFORMANCE

- ☐ Use fast, reliable hosting (I use and recommend [SiteGround]())

☐ Enable native caching (via your host)
☐ Install optimizer plugin ([SiteGround Optimizer Plugin](#), [WP Rocket](#), etc.)
☐ Compress images & enable lazy loading
☐ Minify/combine CSS/JS files
☐ Use CDN ([Cloudflare](#) or host-provided)

💾 DATABASE & FILE BACKUPS (WordPress)

*** IMPORTANT: Back up site before any launch or DNS change ***

Tools to help manage WP sites and backups:

☐ [ManageWP](#) or [WP Umbrella](#)
☐ [UpdraftPlus](#)
☐ Hosting provider backup tools

Accessing database:

☐ Refer back to MySQL & phpMyAdmin course lessons
☐ Access files via FTP (if needed)

🌟 Pro Tips

✅ Always keep a local/exported copy (screenshot if need be) of DNS records before editing
✅ BACKUP your WordPress site (files and database) before moving or launching
✅ Test email sending from contact forms after launch
✅ Use staging environments for safe dev & testing
✅ Don't DIY advanced stuff if you're unsure — bring in an expert like [my DNS guru Amr](#)

➡️ Next Steps

Get instant access to Josh's new DNS Course + all Web Designer Pro™ Courses

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